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Yayoi Hirano, Yoshimi Sunazaki and Yoshiho Hara greeted spring and Sakura Night gala-goers in their traditional dress.

BABY SHOWER: While the arrival of a new baby is a joyous time for most women, filled with celebration and anticipation, for some low income families and single mothers struggling financially, the arrival of a newborn is fraught with worry about not being able to provide for the baby in their early development. BabyGoRound, created by Jennifer Randall Nelson, is dedicated to providing Lower Mainland families in need with essential equipment, clothing and products for their infants and young children. Since its creation five years ago, BabyGoRound has supported more than 5,000 families with gently used cribs, strollers and clothing so parents can focus on putting resources to other essentials such as food, diapers and rent. The organization recently staged its annual benefit. Love It or List It host and new mom Jillian Harris and yours truly fronted the baby shower. Some 200 influential women convened at Telus Garden for the baby benefit, which featured a live auction and red carpet fashion show by Isola Bella and Misch. Nelson aimed to raise \$60,000 for her fledgling charity, two-third of the outfit’s annual budget.

SHOP SCOTCH: Sixty handsome men in their sartorial best gathered at Harry Rosen after hours for a tasting event of fine scotch hosted by Macallan, one of the most famous and honoured single malt scotch brands in the world. A play on the decades-old tradition of shop-and-scotch that retail owner Harry Rosen once employed to entice men into his retail outlet, this time around there was no need as scotch enthusiasts eagerly ponied up to the pop-up whisky bar in anticipation of the portfolio tasting. Led by brand ambassador Dan Volway and celebrated barkeep David Wolowidnyk, attendees got a taste of Macallan’s award-winning range of whiskies (from Gold, Amber, Sienna, Rare Cask and their newest, the 12-year-old Double Cask) as they pondered their next purchases of designer suits and accessories.

AN EXPLOSION OF PINK: There’s no prettier sign that spring is here than the blossoming of the 40,000-plus cherry blossom trees decorating our city. Last year, the trees were three weeks early. This year they were three weeks late for the annual Vancouver Cherry Blossom festival, which celebrates the urban beauty. Festival founder Linda Poole kicked off the month-long celebrations of walking tours, musical performances and art exhibitions with the festival’s flagship Sakura Night Gala. Attracting hundreds to the Stanley Park Pavilion for the pink blossom-inspired food and wine grazer, the event featured eight local chefs and raised funds for the festival. Among this year’s culinary talents participating were Zen’s Nobu Ochi, Hapa Izakaya’s Takayuki Sato and Ancora’s Ricardo Valverde. James Coleridge’s Bella Gelateria served up a sweet ending. The Cherry Blossom Festival takes place at various venues across town until April 23.

COOKING UP SUCCESS: Les Dames d’Escoffier is an international organization of successful women from gastronomy and hospitality that promotes an understanding and appreciation of food, fine beverage and hospitality, and the advancement of women in these disciplines. B.C. Chapter presidents Annette Rawlinson and Karen Dar Woon, along with fellow Dames, recently gathered at Savoury Chef Foods to celebrate and honour 28 scholarship recipients, beneficiaries of Les Dames fundraising efforts throughout the year. A reported \$30,000 was disbursed to talented women who wish to advance in their culinary and hospitality fields. From the famed Cordon Bleu in Paris and Culinary Institute of America, New York, to cheese making in England and wine making in the Okanagan, past recipients have used the scholarships to advance their careers to great heights. “This is an opportunity for me to change my life and I never could have done it without financial help,” says Liliya Zhekova, who will be attending pastry school this spring at the Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts.